Service Tax on Private Bus Operators

16. SHRI V. RAJESHWAR RAO:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that implementation of the service tax on the private bus passenger operators is very complicated to administer and collect and that the representatives of their unions have strongly protested against the difficulties being created due to this;

(b) whether they have suggested some easy ways for this matter;

(c) if so, what are their suggestions; and

(d) Government's response to their suggestions?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) No Sir. The Maharashtra Rajya Truck Tempo Bus Vahatuk Mahasangh, Mumbai have demanded withdrawal of service tax on tour operators as majority of person engaged in this service will not be able to register, collect and pay service tax as they are mostly illiterate.

(b) No. Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Pakistani Firing across LOC in Kargil

*17. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan firing and shelling across the Line of Control and border in Jammu & Kashmir was intensified following meetings between Foreign Secretaries and Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan in New Delhi and New York, in september this year so much so that Pak forces used air defence arms for shelling the Kargil on September 30, 1997;

(b) if so, whether Government find a pattern and plan behind these unprovoked across border attacks by Pakistan, if so, the details thereof, indicating civilian and other casualties on both sides during the last six months; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) to (c) Unprovoked firing from Pakistani side across the Line of Control (LOC) and the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir had intensified before the Foreign Secretaries met in Delhi in September this year. Pak also resorted to firing on Kargil town and the populated areas around it on 30 September 1997, which coincided with the Prime Minister's visit to New York. Air defence weapons were also used in direct firing role by Pak in Kargil.

Pak endeavours to keep the border alive in order to portray J&K as a 'flash point'. To achieve this aim, it has also resorted to unprovoked firing before any major political event or talks between India and Pak. Firing is also initiated by Pak troops to abet infiltration of militants and arms into J&K.

Details of casualties suffered due to Pakistani firing in Siachen Glacier, LOC and IB in J & K during January to October 1997 are as given in statement (*See below*).

The situation along the border is monitioned regularly and all necessary steps are taken to counter Pakistani misadventure on the border. Whenever there is unprovoked firing from Pakistani troops, our troops give appropriate response taking due care that the incident remains localised and our casualties are minimal.

There are established mechanisms such as formation level flag meetings and scheduled weekly telephonic conversation between DG&MO of the two countries.